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Foreword

Gardening & Recycling Organics Wisely

The Gardening and Recycling Organics Wisely (GROW) program was developed by a unique cross-country partnership to encourage waste reduction and to protect land and water resources in South Carolina. The core material of the workbook is from the Saving Water Partnership of Seattle, WA, a group of more than 25 local water providers. They produced the "Natural Lawn & Garden Series" of books: Natural Lawn Care; Growing Healthy Soil; Smart Watering; Choosing the Right Plants; Natural Pest, Weed & Disease Control; and Composting at Home. Using beautiful photographs, illustrations and carefully prepared text, these publications have provided residents with inviting and readable information for becoming good stewards of the earth. The Saving Water Partnership has allowed South Carolina to customize the information and benefit from its outstanding work.

GROW has many parents, including the Piedmont Landscaping and Naturescaping Training (PLANT) that offers a holistic approach to conserving soil and applying green gardening approaches. The PLANT program has been adopted by the Carolina Recycling Association Composting Council as the vehicle for promoting these concepts in North Carolina. GROW is the companion program for South Carolina.

The GROW steering committee is represented by:

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Bill Culler, DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction & Recycling, Director

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The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling provides educational programs and technical assistance on solid waste issues.

If you would like more information on the GROW program or other services, please call the Office at 1-800-768-7348 or visit our Web site at www.scdhec.net/recycle.



Adapted from the Seattle, Washington Saving Water Partnership, "The Natural Lawn & Garden Series."

www.cityofseattle.net/util/rescons.

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Illustrations by Wilda Boyd.






Introduction

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Gardening is the most popular hobby in America, and rightfully so. It offers the benefits of beauty, nourishment and exercise. Also, gardening establishes connections with friends and neighbors in the community and serves as a bridge between generations of young and not-so-young gardeners. I still have fond childhood memories of my grandfather sharing stories with me while we worked side-by-side in the garden.

Whether you have a garden or a landscape at home or in the community, strive to become a knowledgeable and responsible gardener. Watering, fertilizing and controlling pests affect the health and appearance of the plants in your garden and landscape. However, these activities also have an impact on the environment. Therefore, gardeners have the responsibility of safeguarding our land and water resources.

The GROW manual contains information and techniques that will improve your gardening skills and help you protect and preserve our environment. A few of the practices that are discussed in the GROW manual include:

-  Building healthy, fertile soil with organic matter and selecting and using appropriate fertilizers. Soil is the foundation of the garden and landscape. Improving its fertility and selecting the right fertilizers will keep the plants healthy and protect water quality.
-  Reducing waste by recycling yard trimmings and food scraps back into the garden and landscape. This sustainable practice “feeds” your plants and improves the soil.
-  Conserving water by watering efficiently at the right time and with the right amount.
-  Managing pests — weeds, insects, and diseases — by learning how to avoid them and how to deal with pests when they appear. This section will introduce you to non-chemical approaches, such as managing insects by handpicking, trapping, or using barriers, before resorting to less toxic pesticides. When pesticides are absolutely necessary, applying them properly will avoid harming beneficial insects and animals as well as contaminating soil, surface water and groundwater.
-  Selecting the right plants for the right location in our South Carolina landscapes. Growing adapted, pest-resistant plants will make gardening less about controlling pests and more about growing and enjoying plants.

At the end of each chapter you will find a list of books, organizations, Web sites and other helpful resources.

The GROW program will inform and inspire you. It will fuel your desire to grow vegetables, flowers, shrubs and trees. The program may even encourage you to teach your friends and neighbors about composting, fertilizing and watering wisely, and managing pests responsibly. Enjoy your adventure with GROW as you learn how to protect our natural resources as you create and maintain nourishing gardens and beautiful landscapes.